

In the Claims:

Claims 1-4 (allowed)

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5. (previously amended) A single disc friction clutch for a motor vehicle, comprising:
- a clutch housing;
  - a single clutch disc being configured to be mounted on a transmission input shaft having a longitudinal axis;
  - said single clutch disc being configured to be axially movable along the longitudinal axis of a transmission input shaft;
  - a solid pressure plate having a surface;
  - at least one friction lining mounted on said clutch disc; said at least one friction lining being configured to be disposed between said pressure plate and a flywheel;
  - said pressure plate being configured and disposed to engage and disengage said clutch disc with a flywheel; said pressure plate being configured and disposed to be axially movable along the longitudinal axis of a transmission input shaft;
  - a membrane spring; said membrane spring being disposed between said clutch housing and said pressure plate and having on one axial side a radially extending surface facing said pressure plate;
  - said membrane spring being configured and disposed to bias said pressure plate;
  - a thermal insulating member supported on said surface of said pressure plate and disposed between said pressure plate and said membrane spring so that the insulating member is only in axial contact with said radially extending surface of said membrane spring;
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said thermal insulating member being configured to minimize the contact between said thermal insulating member and said membrane spring;

said insulating member being a single, one-piece element and extending circumferentially about said pressure plate and having a first resistance to thermal conductivity and said membrane spring has a second resistance to thermal conductivity, and wherein said first resistance to thermal conductivity is higher than said second resistance;

said thermal insulating member being rigid and comprising a metal;

said metal of said insulating member being configured to minimize heat conduction from said pressure plate to said membrane spring.

6. (original) The friction clutch of claim 5, wherein said insulating member comprises a first surface and a second surface; said first surface being disposed to contact said membrane spring and said second surface being disposed to contact said pressure plate.

7. (original) The friction clutch of claim 5, wherein said membrane spring comprises a first material; said first material has a first resistance to thermal conductivity; said pressure plate comprises a second material; said second material has a second resistance to thermal conductivity; said metal of said insulating member has a third resistance to thermal conductivity; and the third resistance to thermal conductivity is greater than at least one of the first resistance to thermal conductivity and the second resistance to thermal conductivity.

8. (currently amended) A single disc friction clutch for a motor vehicle, said friction clutch comprising:

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a clutch housing;

a clutch disc;

said single clutch disc being configured to be mounted on a transmission input shaft having a longitudinal axis;

said single clutch disc being configured to be axially movable along the longitudinal axis of a transmission input shaft;

a pressure plate;

at least one friction lining mounted on said clutch disc;

said at least one friction lining being configured to be disposed between said pressure plate and a flywheel;

said pressure plate being configured and disposed to engage and disengage said clutch disc with a flywheel;

said pressure plate being configured and disposed to be axially movable along the longitudinal axis of a transmission input shaft;

a membrane spring;

said membrane spring being disposed between said clutch housing and said pressure plate;

said membrane spring being configured and disposed to bias said pressure plate;

said pressure plate comprising a first portion and a second portion;

said first portion of said pressure plate being disposed to contact said clutch disc;

said second portion of said pressure plate being disposed away from said clutch disc and having a radial length;

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a thermal insulating member being configured to minimize heat conduction from said pressure plate to said membrane spring;

said pressure plate having a protrusion extending axially in the direction of said membrane spring;

said insulating member being disposed at said protrusion between said membrane spring and said first portion of said pressure plate and forming an insulating layer in contact with and along said length of said second portion;

said second portion of said pressure plate forming part of said protrusion and being disposed between said insulating member and said membrane spring to contact said membrane spring;

said insulating member being rigid and comprising a metal and being a single, one-piece element extending circumferentially above said pressure plate;

said metal of said insulating member being configured to minimize heat conduction from said first portion of said pressure plate to said membrane spring to minimize distortion of said membrane spring from thermal conduction of heat from said pressure plate to said membrane spring.